

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PINS, EG

SUBJECT: DISPOSITION OF CASES FROM JANUARY 1977 RIOTS

1. COUNSELOR OF DEPARTMENT, MATTHEW NIMETZ, HAS RECEIVED LETTER FROM VICTOR KOVNER OF NEW YORK LAW FIRM, LANKENAU KOVNER AND BICKFORD, CONCERNING STATUS OF EGYPTIANS WAITING TRIAL IN CONNECTION WITH JANUARY 1977 RIOTS.

2. KOVNER WITH WIFE SARAH, VISITED EGYPT IN FEBRUARY OF THIS YEAR. DURING VISIT THEY MET CHEHATA HAROUN WHOM THEY DESCRIBE AS A JEWISH LAWYER ACTIVE IN THE EGYPTIAN LEFT. KOVNER MET HAROUN THROUGH FRIENDS ACTIVE IN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL (AI). MRS. KOVNER HAS BEEN WORKING FOR SOME TIME WITH AI.

3. KOVNER LEARNED FROM HAROUN THAT NEARLY 200 EGYPTIANS OF VARYING DEGREES OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY WERE SOON TO BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL IN CONNECTION WITH 1977 RIOTS. ACCORDING TO HAROUN A NUMBER OF LEFTIST LEADERS WERE SIMPLY PICKED

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UP, JAILED AND HAVE NOW BEEN CHARGED WITHOUT ANY TANGIBLE CONNECTION TO RIOTS. HAROUN HAS EXPRESSED HOPE THAT DEPARTMENT COULD INQUIRE ABOUT THESE PROSECUTIONS TO DETERMINE WHETHER THEY ARE BASED UPON THE DEFENDANT'S POLITICAL PHILOSOPHERS AS DISTINCT FROM ANY OVERT ACTS OF VIOLENCE.

4. KOVNER EXPRESSED GENERAL PLEASURE WITH VISIT TO

EGYPT AND MENTIONED "INFORMATIVE AND HOSPITABLE" MEETING
WITH POLCON LOWRIE.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE EMBASSY'S COMMENTS BY APRIL 3 ON
STATUS OF DISPOSITION OF CASES AGAINST EGYPTIANS CHARGED
IN CONNECTION WITH 1977 RIOTS AND ANY OTHER INFORMATION
WHICH WOULD BE USEFUL IN PREPARING A RESPONSE TO KOVNER
LETTER. VANCE

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